

# ***Contributors***

## **Madison County Comprehensive Plan, 1999 Update**

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **Preface**

Madison County's first Comprehensive Plan was prepared by the Planning Board and adopted by the County Commissioners in 1973. The Plan attempted to address two problems: (1) the loss of agricultural lands to increasing recreational and second home development; and (2) the seasonal nature of the County's agricultural and recreational employment.

Thirteen years later, in response to mounting development pressures in the Madison Valley, the Planning Board began work on a revision of the 1973 Plan. The Plan Update was completed in 1988. It contained a stricter set of countywide subdivision review policies. It also included a land use plan for the Madison Valley.

The past decade has been marked by continued growth and change. Madison County's beauty and rural character have attracted more residents and visitors. The interests and values of County citizens have grown more diverse. Recreation and tourism, retirement-related services, entrepreneurial enterprises, and construction activity have joined the traditional industries of agriculture, forestry, and mining as important economic sectors. Land is increasingly valued for its aesthetic and recreational assets, rather than its agricultural productivity. This trend, combined with other factors such as land speculation and declining agricultural incomes, has led to the conversion of more rangeland and farmland to residential subdivision and recreational development.

Such social, cultural, economic, and land use changes have not been confined to the Madison Valley. They are evident also in the Ruby Valley, in the Jefferson Valley, and at Big Sky. Over the next ten years, transitions in other parts of the County are likely.

Growth and change impact a variety of County resources, including the economic base, air and water, vegetation and wildlife, open landscape, sense of community, and public service systems. Many long-time County residents perceive the negative impacts of growth and change as a serious threat to their rural lifestyle. Many newcomers fear that continued growth and change will degrade the quality of life which drew them here.

The Madison County Commissioners, in turn, face increasingly difficult decisions regarding land development and conservation. One of their greatest challenges is to provide essential public services at an affordable cost to an expanding population.

The Planning Board and County Commissioners recognize the need to strengthen their capacity to address the issues associated with growth and change. Hence, this second revision of the Madison County Comprehensive Plan.

## **General Statement of Purpose**

Like its predecessors, the 1999 Plan Update serves as a guide for County elected officials, citizens, and developers engaged in making decisions about land use, economic development, and capital investment.

Growth and change will continue to play a part in Madison County's future. The primary objective of this planning document is to equip County officials and citizens with the policies and tools needed to guide future growth and change in ways that will not only accommodate new priorities and opportunities, but also preserve long-valued resources and traditions.

It should be clearly stated that, while the 1999 Plan Update guides County decision-making on land utilization, including subdivision, the decisions themselves must be governed by local regulations and Montana state statutes. County officials will be cognizant of, and abide by, state and federal law as it pertains to private property rights.

### **Legal Authority for County Comprehensive Planning**

Montana State Statutes encourage county governments to "...improve the present health, safety, convenience, and welfare of their citizens and to plan for the future development of their communities..." [76-1-102, MCA].

State law authorizes county commissioners to establish a county planning board as an advisory board to help accomplish its comprehensive planning program. County planning boards are obligated to prepare a master plan, which is defined as "...a comprehensive development plan or any of its parts such as a plan of land use and zoning, of thoroughfares, of sanitation, of recreation, and of other related matters" [76-1-103, MCA]. Possible (but not required) elements of a master plan are listed in the statutes. They include items such as: (1) studies of existing conditions; (2) projections of future growth; (3) descriptions of current land use, population densities, public services and facilities; and (4) recommendations about the future growth and development of the county [76-1-601, MCA].

Once a master plan, or comprehensive plan, has been adopted (or updated), the county commissioners must be guided by the plan in making public facility improvements, adopting subdivision regulations, and adopting zoning ordinances [76-1-605, MCA]. The county commissioners may also require by resolution that subdivision plats must conform with the plan [76-1-606, MCA]. The planning board remains involved in comprehensive plan implementation in various ways, including the review of specific development proposals.

### **Comprehensive Plan Update Process**

Preparation of this 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update began in the fall of 1996, at the initiative of the Madison County Planning Board. The first phase of the planning process focused on establishing a GIS (geographic information system) mapping program. The Madison County planner was assigned the top priority task of developing an electronic map of County subdivisions and certificates of survey.

With the mapping project underway, the Planning Board began holding monthly "work sessions" in addition to their normal monthly meetings. Resource specialists were invited to visit with the Board and provide information on topics such as wildlife, water supply, and

sanitation review. The County planner met with local community groups to explain the comprehensive planning process.

But the Planning Board's subdivision review workload made progress on the Comprehensive Plan Update difficult. Citing insufficient time to spend on comprehensive planning, the Board recommended in December 1997 that the County Commissioners impose a six-month subdivision moratorium.

In February 1998, the County Commissioners voted down the proposed moratorium. However, they agreed to commit additional County funds to hire a consulting planner to work with the Planning Board, County planner, and local citizens to complete the Plan Update by December 1998.

In the spring and summer of 1998, several community workshops were held around the County. The workshops had a twofold purpose: (1) to provide information to local citizens; and (2) to gain direct citizen involvement in shaping the direction of the Plan Update. Discussion focused on five topics:

- *Where Would You Put the Next 1000 People in Madison County?*
- *What Tools Can We Use to Guide Growth?*
- *Grassroots-Style Zoning*
- *Open Space and Development: How Can We Have Both?*
- *Getting New Development to Pay for Itself*

Additional information-gathering activities were conducted, including a survey of 40 local service providers, a current land use inventory, the collection and mapping of resource data, consultations with municipal officials, and a *Planning for the Future* booth at the Madison County Fair. Four questions provided the basis for public discussion at the Fair. They were:

- *Where would you put the next residential development?*
- *Where would you least like to see the next residential development?*
- *Should the County restrict development along the river corridors?*
- *Do we need zoning in Madison County?*

A draft Plan Update was made available for public review and comment during the fall of 1998. Open houses were held around the County. Formal public hearings followed. The Plan Update was adopted in February 1999 by the County Commissioners, upon the recommendation of the Planning Board (See Appendix A for record of public input received throughout planning process).

### **Role of 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update**

The updating of a comprehensive plan does not invalidate all previous plans. Since planning is a continual process, each revised plan builds upon its predecessors.

The information contained in the 1973 Plan and 1988 Update continues to serve as valuable background for planning in Madison County (See Appendices B and C, and note

especially the primary policies and recommendations of each plan document). The 1999 Comprehensive Plan Update supplements this information base with more current data. It revises the countywide goals and objectives, policies, and proposed actions outlined in the two previous County planning documents. It also revises the Madison Valley land use policies and recommendations found in the 1988 Update.

This 1999 Plan Update replaces the 1973 and 1988 plan documents as the official Madison County Comprehensive Plan.



## **II. A PROFILE OF MADISON COUNTY**

A summary profile of Madison County is presented below. For more detailed information, refer to data sources.

## **History**

- Native American tribes traveled through the Madison and Ruby Valleys to hunt buffalo on the plains.
- The Lewis and Clark expedition visited Madison County in the early 1800s.
- Gold was discovered in Alder Gulch in 1863. Within a year 10,000 miners were working these gold deposits.
- Madison County was first established in the Territory of Idaho, in 1864. Later that year, Madison County became part of Montana when the Montana Territory was admitted into the Union.
- In 1865, Virginia City became the capital of the Montana Territory and served as its financial, governmental, and population center for a decade. In 1875, the capital was moved to Helena.
- Other communities developed in Madison County to support an economy based on mining, logging, farming, and ranching.
- The historic resources of Madison County include archaeological sites, historic bridges, Forest Service administrative facilities, mining districts, barns, churches, schools, and homesteads.

## **Population**

- Nearly 7000 people now call Madison County home. Year-round population is growing at an estimated rate of 2% per year. In addition, the number of seasonal residents and annual visitors has increased.
- The County's year-round population grew an estimated 15% from 1990 to 1997. Net migration accounts for the vast majority of this growth.
- Approximately 2/3 of County residents live in rural areas; 1/3 live in town.
- Ennis is the fastest growing town in the County. From 1990 to 1996, Ennis grew more than 29%, to an estimated population of 1000.
- Between 1970 and 1990, the percentage of Madison County's younger population (under 18) declined.

## **Housing**

- In 1990, Madison County contained 3902 total housing units. Of these, 42% were owner-occupied and 19% were renter-occupied.
- Vacant units (including seasonal residences) made up 39% of the total housing stock in 1990. However, local sources estimated vacancy rates at only 0-5% in the communities of Madison County, as of April 1998.
- The majority of housing units in the County are on individual sewer and water systems.
- Although county-level data about recent trends in the housing market are not available, concern about a lack of affordable housing is widespread. In August 1998, the Montana Department of Commerce described the problem as one

affecting many Montanans. Specifically, “The housing inventory does not appear to have grown along with the past rise in population. The implication is that the affordable housing market, whether for rental properties or home ownership, has been constrained. Consequently, prices rise...Generally, in more rapidly growing areas of the state, it is likely that more than half of all households face an appreciable cost burden...Overall, the gap between Montana’s lower-income citizens and available, affordable housing appears to be widening.”

## **Jobs**

- Agriculture, retail trade, and services are the three largest employment sectors in the County. However, farm and ranch employment declined by 29% between 1970 and 1995. During the same period, retail trade and services employment grew 100% and 57% respectively.
- Nonfarm sectors of the economy are the main sources of new jobs, especially construction, retail trade, and services.
- Over a third of Madison County’s workers are self-employed.
- The County unemployment rate is consistently below statewide and national averages.
- Major private employers include (listed in alphabetical order): A.M. Welles, Barrett Minerals, Big Sky of Montana, Boyne USA, Cominco American, Economy Market, Ennis Pharmacy, First Madison Valley Bank, JDL Construction, Luzenac America, Moonlight Basin Ranch, R.L. Winston Rod Company, Ruby Valley National Bank, Singleton Construction.
- Major public employers include: local school districts, municipalities, and conservation districts, Madison County (including two nursing homes), state and federal governments, Madison Valley Hospital, Ruby Valley Hospital.

## **Income**

- Per capita income in 1995 was below the statewide average and less than 2/3 of the national average.
- Personal income relies heavily on non-labor income sources, such as dividend and social security payments. From 1970 to 1995, 73% of the growth in personal income came from non-labor sources.
- Farm and ranch income (both gross and total net) declined from 1970 to 1995, due to depressed prices and increased production costs.
- Agricultural productivity remains high, as demonstrated by top ten statewide rankings for production of alfalfa hay, other hay, potatoes, cattle and calves.
- In 1987, farm sales exceeded \$34 million, compared to a total of \$24 million in wholesale, retail, and service sector sales. 1992 figures were \$37 million and \$32 million, respectively.
- During 1992-94, Montana resident and non-resident big game hunters in the Gravelly Landscape Analysis area (which includes portions of both Beaverhead and Madison Counties) spent an estimated \$8 million annually in the region (Region boundaries are unknown, but they extend beyond Madison County).

- In 1995, fishermen on the Beaverhead, Big Hole, Jefferson, Madison, and Ruby Rivers spent in excess of \$22 million in the region (Again, region boundaries are unknown, but they extend beyond Madison County).<sup>1</sup>

### **Public Finance, Public Services**

- Mining operations paid \$2,981,818 in net proceeds tax to Madison County in 1998.
- Madison County received \$249,966 in PILT (payment-in-lieu-of-taxes for tax exempt federal land) money in 1998.
- Residential real estate is the largest direct contributor to the County tax base.
- Education receives the largest share of the County resident's property tax dollar. In recent years, voters in Harrison, Ennis, and Sheridan school districts have approved special mill levies for facility expansions.
- Since the Initiative 105 (I-105) cap on mill levies was imposed in 1986, Madison County voters have approved special levies for the County nursing homes, County weed control program, rural fire district services, and cemetery districts.
- Many emergency service providers fear they will not have sufficient resources to meet the future demands of a growing population.

### **Transportation**

- Madison County has an estimated 1200 miles of County road. School bus routes and other heavily traveled County roads generally receive highest priority for maintenance and snow removal by County road crews. Road and bridge improvements in all three road districts are needed, to varying degrees.
- 1989-1997 traffic counts along state and federal highways reflect a substantial increase along some segments and an actual decrease along others. Increases ranged from 2% just south of Ennis along US 287, to 76% along a portion of MT 41 between Twin Bridges and Dillon. Decreases of 15-16% were experienced along MT 287, from Alder to Virginia City and Virginia City to Ennis. A 13% decrease was also experienced between Ennis and Norris, along US 287.
- Major highways, secondary roads, and bridges are regularly evaluated by the Montana Department of Transportation to identify needs for rehabilitation, reconstruction, and paving. Upcoming projects are listed in Table 1.
- Madison County operates two airports. The Madison County Airport Board is exploring the need for improvements at the Big Sky Airport southeast of Ennis. No improvements are planned at the Twin Bridges Airport.

### **Land**

- Madison County contains 2.3 million acres, or 3587 square miles of land (and 16 square miles of waterbody).
- Several mountain ranges and associated "intermontane" (between-the- mountains) basins dominate the topography.

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<sup>1</sup>Hunting and fishing expenditure information is based upon surveys conducted by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks.

- Madison County lies within the Intermountain Seismic Belt, which is the most seismically active area within Montana.
- Several types of minerals are present, including gold, garnet, talc and chlorite. Madison County also contains extensive deposits of sand and gravel.
- Soil types vary widely and support a variety of vegetation and land uses.
- 109,000 acres of private land are classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service as prime farmland.

### **Land Status and Use**

- Madison County contains about 46% federal land, 6% state land, and 48% private land.
- As of October 1, 1998, approximately 73,000 acres in Madison County were subdivided (7% of total private land). Most of the recent subdivision activity has been in the Ruby Valley and at Big Sky. In addition, thousands of privately owned acres have been divided into parcels by the certificate of survey process. See Figure 1.
- In 1996, 96% of the private lands in Madison County were classified either agricultural or timber land for tax assessment purposes. The breakdown was 75% rangeland, 12% cropland/hayground, and 9% forested land.
- An October 1998 sampling of Madison County's larger residential subdivisions indicated that, out of 2859 total lots, approximately 19% (545) were built on. 81% (2314) remained undeveloped.
- As of July 1998, conservation easements were in effect on approximately 150,000 acres of private ground (14% of total private land).

### **Water**

- Water is an important resource. Madison County contains all or part of several intermontane drainage basins. Water supply varies from basin to basin, and within each basin. Factors which determine the availability of groundwater and surface water at any particular location include its hydrogeological character, climate, and land uses in the vicinity.
- Most residents rely on groundwater for drinking water and other household purposes. It is also used for livestock and irrigation purposes.
- Surface water supports irrigation practices, fish and other wildlife populations, and recreational activities.
- The floodplains associated with Madison County's rivers and streams serve many functions, including wildlife habitat, aquifer recharge, and the subirrigation of hayfields. An estimated 36,300 acres in the County are considered flood-prone. This includes both land area and river channels.
- The Montana Department of Environmental Quality's draft 1998 list of water quality-impaired stream segments includes 64 water bodies in Madison County. Identified problem sources include: agricultural/logging/mining practices, road/bridge/dam construction, roadway maintenance and runoff, septic tanks, land development, removal of riparian vegetation, streambank modification, and natural causes. An

evaluation of the DEQ list is ongoing. Some stream segments will likely be removed from the list, while others may be added.

### **Fish and Wildlife**

- The lands and waters of Madison County support abundant fish and wildlife. Agricultural lands have increasingly provided important habitat for a variety of species.
- Population levels of different species have fluctuated over the past decade. The winter range and overall distribution of big game have been mapped, as well as locations where species of special concern may be found.

### **Vegetation**

- The spread of noxious weeds has become an increasing economic and environmental threat. An estimated 150,000 acres in Madison County are infested with spotted and/or diffused knapweed. Another 80,000 acres are infested with leafy spurge.
- Locations where vegetative species of special concern may be found have been mapped.

### **Current Growth-Related Issues and Opportunities Include:**

- Differences between newcomer and long-time resident expectations and lifestyles
- Loss of agricultural land to subdivision development
- Future viability of agriculture in the face of continued population growth based on the County's beauty, rural character, and recreational resources
- Growth of nontraditional industries
- Utilization of the resources on the land
- Fish and wildlife concerns
- Loss of open space and aesthetic value
- Cost of public services to support new development
- Adequacy of water supply to support new development
- State and federal requirements to improve water quality
- Need for sewer/water systems in Harrison and Alder
- Infrastructure improvement projects in Ennis, Sheridan, Twin Bridges, Virginia City, and Big Sky
- Spread of noxious weeds
- Costs of County road/bridge maintenance
- Costs of County nursing home operations
- Initiative 105 ceiling on County mill levy
- Constitutional Amendment No. 75
- Coordination between local, county, state, and federal governments
- Vacant commercial/industrial/institutional properties (e.g., Children's Center outside of Twin Bridges, greenhouse facility outside of Ennis)

## **Data Sources**

### *Publications:*

An Economic and Demographic Analysis of Montana. Prepared August, 1998 by the Montana Department of Commerce.

Geographic, Geologic, and Hydrologic Summaries of Intermontane Basins of the Northern Rocky Mountains, Montana, prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey. Water Resources Investigations Report 96-4025, August 1996.

MACO News, October 1998. Montana Association of Counties.

Madison County Land Use Inventory, October 1998. Madison County planning staff.

Montana List of Waterbodies in Need of Total Maximum Daily Load Development. Draft prepared by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, 1998.

Overall Economic Development Plan for Headwaters Resource Conservation & Development Area, Inc. (includes list of historic resources in Madison County). Prepared in 1995 by Headwaters RC&D/Economic Development District.

Soil Survey of Madison County Area, Montana. Issued September, 1989 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Strategic Economic Action Plan for Ennis and the Madison Valley, April 1998. Prepared for the Community Development Action Team (CEDAT) and the Town of Ennis by Beck Consulting, Inc.

Summary Profile of Madison County. Also, Data Supplement to 1998 Madison County Profile. Prepared April, 1998 by Madison County planning staff with assistance from several sources.

1998 Survey of Local Service Providers, Survey Results, and Survey Summary. Prepared by Madison County Planning Board and planning staff.

### *Other Sources:*

Board of Madison County Commissioners.

Madison County Assessor's Office.

Madison County citizens.

Madison County Resolution 4-84, regarding County road maintenance.

Madison County Resource Map Collection.

Madison County Weed Board.

Montana Bureau of Mines.

Montana Department of Transportation.

Office of Research and Analysis, Montana Department of Labor & Industry.

Table 1

**BRIDGE AND HIGHWAY PROJECTS SCHEDULED, 1999-2003**

| LOCATION                                       | TYPE OF PROJECT   |
|--|---|
| Madison River at Wade Lake Road                | Bridge replacement  |
| Indian Creek southeast of Ennis                | Bridge replacement  |
| Jefferson River at Silver Star                 | Bridge replacement  |
| Irrigation canal north and east of Silver Star | Bridge replacement  |
| MT 41 south of Twin Bridges to Beaverhead Rock | Highway resurfacing   |
| MT 287/41 north and south of Silver Star       | Highway reconstruction  |
| US 287 north and south of Cameron              | Highway reconstruction  |
| Southeast of Ennis                             | 5 bridge replacements   |
| Big Hole River southeast of Glen               | 2 bridge replacements   |
| MT 41 north of Twin Bridges to Iron Rod bridge | Highway reconstruction  |
| MT 84 at northeast corner of Madison Co.       | Highway reconstruction  |
| MT 287 from Sheridan to Twin Bridges           | Highway reconstruction  |
| MT 287 from Sheridan to Virginia City          | Highway resurfacing   |
| US 287 from Harrison north to County line      | Highway resurfacing   |
| Varney Road south of Ennis                     | Reconstruction of major portions<br>(Note: This is a potential project. It is not yet scheduled, but it is Madison County's first priority for secondary highway work.) |

Data Source: Montana Department of Transportation, October 1998.

Note: In addition to the projects listed above, the Ruby-Centennial Road (which runs between the Gravelly and Snowcrest mountain ranges) is slated for reconstruction, including bridge replacements, in 1999 by the U.S. Forest Service.



## Figure 1, County Subdivisions and Certificates of Survey

Note: This map is a “work in progress” and does not depict all subdivisions and COSs in the County.

### **III. MADISON COUNTY IN THE YEAR 2009: OUR VISION**

What kind of future do we citizens of Madison County want for ourselves, our children, and our grandchildren? What guiding principles for future growth will help us achieve that future? What commonly held goals and objectives are we willing to work towards?

### **Our Vision**

In the year 2009, we hope Madison County is still a place we're proud to call home. Still blessed with people who are hardworking yet funloving, independent yet compassionate and generous in time of need. Still devoted to supporting our youth and senior populations. Still relatively free of crime and pollution. Still rich in water, scenic beauty, wildlife, historical, and recreational resources. Still rural in character and agriculturally productive. Still rooted in the tradition of being good stewards of the land.

In the year 2009, we hope Madison County's economy has gained strength and diversity, with agricultural households enjoying a more financially secure position. We hope our river bottoms, hayfields, rangelands, and foothills have not become cluttered by scattered residential development. We hope noxious weeds have lost their foothold on our landscape. We hope our towns have retained their small-town atmosphere, while offering a variety of goods and services to local residents and visitors. We hope families of modest income levels can afford to live here. We hope local public services have adequate funds to support our increased population. We hope the art of being a good neighbor is widely practiced by both newcomers and oldtimers. We hope we have become even better stewards of the land.

### **Our Guiding Principles**

During the next 10-12 years, Madison County is projected to grow in population by another 1000 year-round residents. Continued increases in seasonal residents and annual visitors are also expected. Along with this population growth will come additional changes in the local economy, landscape, and culture.

As community planning workshops during the spring of 1998 made evident, local citizens have many ideas and opinions about where future development should or should not occur, and how future growth should or should not be managed. Five recurring themes were expressed. No one theme dominates the others. Rather, they serve together as a set of overarching Guiding Principles in planning for the future of Madison County.

#### ***Guiding Principles***

- #1 Locate new development close to existing services and communities.
- #2 Protect our river corridors.
- #3 Preserve our most productive agricultural lands.
- #4 New development should pay its own way.
- #5 Respect private property rights.

Guiding Principle #1 requires attention to both locational considerations and service system capabilities; Guiding Principle #2, to environmental, public health and safety, recreation, and aesthetic concerns; Guiding Principle #3, to economic, environmental, and cultural issues; Guiding Principle #4, to fiscal and equity issues of concern to many County taxpayers and officials. Guiding Principle #5 is a reminder that Madison County officials will be cognizant of, and abide by, state and federal law as it pertains to private property rights. Consideration of Guiding Principle #5, however, will be balanced by consideration of the public interest, generally defined as the public health, safety, and welfare.

In Madison County, the public interest is more specifically defined by these five Guiding Principles and the following set of Goals and Objectives.

### **Our Goals and Objectives**

Our goals and objectives for land use, the economy, the environment, recreation, and public services have not changed dramatically in the 25 years since Madison County's first comprehensive plan was completed. But as our world has grown more complex, our actions increasingly affect multiple aspects of community life. Likewise, our goals must be regarded as increasingly interconnected.

#### ***Land Use***

Use our land base to support a mix of activities (agriculture, residential, commercial, industrial, public facilities, and recreation) in ways that accommodate growth, minimize conflict among adjacent land uses, promote efficient use of land, protect public health and safety, and reflect the five Guiding Principles.

#### **Objectives:**

1. Develop landowner-supported, neighborhood-specific strategies for land utilization, development, and conservation.
2. Locate development in areas that are:
  - (a) physically suitable for development, and
  - (b) easily accessed by public services.
3. Keep development out of the floodplain and riparian areas.
4. Locate and design developments to maintain the water resource and water rights (in accordance with state law).
5. Locate and design developments to be safe from natural disasters.
6. Locate and design developments in ways that preserve open space.
7. Expand affordable housing opportunities. Encourage projects that are well-designed and accessible to public services. Avoid concentrations of lower-income housing.
8. Discourage scattered rural residential development.
9. Discourage strip commercial development along arterial highways.

***The Economy***

Strengthen the major sectors of our local economy, and diversify the economic base.

Objectives:

1. Support growth in agriculture, forestry, mining, recreation and tourism, retirement-related services, entrepreneurial enterprises, and construction activity.
2. Utilize and protect the resources which support these major economic sectors.
3. Support the economic viability of family farms and ranches.
4. Acknowledge the economic value of the County's fisheries, wildlife, and wildlife habitat.
5. Promote public awareness of the importance of supporting existing local businesses.
6. Promote new business and industry which are compatible with the major economic sectors and do not put a financial strain on public services.
7. Expand the opportunities for year-round employment.

***The Environment***

Protect the quality of our air, groundwater, surface waters, soils, vegetation, fish and wildlife habitat, scenic views, cultural and historic resources.

Objectives:

1. Promote best management practices by all land users.
2. Encourage new development that is compatible with the environmental goals and objectives of this Plan.
3. Support the establishment, expansion, and upgrading of community sewer/water systems.
4. Review new development proposals for the full spectrum of potential and cumulative environmental impacts.
5. Where necessary, more clearly define the resources we want to protect.
6. Promote noxious weed control.

**Recreation**

Support a variety of recreational opportunities for both local residents and visitors.

**Objectives:**

1. Retain public access to public lands and waters.
2. Support opportunities to create additional public access in cooperation with willing private landowners.
3. Minimize conflicts between recreationalists and private landowners.
4. Promote opportunities for public/private land exchanges which will secure high-value recreational resources for public use.
5. Recognize that recreationalists utilize local public services to a great extent.

**Public Services**

Provide high-quality public services to local residents and visitors in safe, fair, and cost-effective ways.

**Objectives:**

1. Encourage new development to locate in areas which have ready access to public services. Discourage new development which will put a financial strain on public services and/or negatively influence the economy.
2. Maintain and improve County roads and bridges according to priorities which are consistent with County land use policies.
3. Devise strategies to assess service users, including recreationalists, who are not currently helping to pay for service costs.
4. Explore other sources of funds to support the provision of public services.
5. Support the community infrastructure improvements needed to entice new development to locate close to existing towns and services.

Growth brings changes in land use and service requirements to not only the most rural parts of Madison County, but also its well-established communities and hamlets. Development in one area often affects another. A new commercial shopping center outside of Ennis, for example, may affect not only rural residents and businesses, but also the townspeople and merchants of Ennis itself. Similarly, a new residential subdivision outside of Sheridan may impact both adjacent private landowners and nearby federal public lands.

Counties, towns, local service districts (e.g., fire, school), and state and federal land managers can all benefit by planning for future changes in land use and public service demands. The participation of local citizens in the planning process can vastly enhance its ultimate value. Communication and coordinated efforts among all affected parties are crucial. A sixth goal is therefore stated, with accompanying objectives.

***Communication, Coordination, and Citizen Participation (3C's)***

Promote an open, inclusive, and coordinated approach to planning for the future in Madison County (Leadership in this regard will be provided by the County Commissioners).

**Objectives:**

1. Consult with town officials and other local service providers on a regular basis. As much as possible, support their efforts to plan and pay for future growth and improve public services.
2. Meet regularly with state and federal land managers to discuss respective land use plans, management strategies, and specific projects/project proposals.
3. Maintain open communications with the public on planning and development issues. Provide ample opportunity for local citizens to participate in planning and plan implementation.

## **IV. LAND DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION/UTILIZATION POLICIES**



In addition to the Guiding Principles and set of goals and objectives, the following policies will guide the future land use decisions of Madison County officials. Guiding Principles and/or Goals pertinent to each policy statement are identified.

### **Wherever Possible, New Development Should:**

| Policy # | Policy Statement  | <i>Pertinent Guiding Principles and/or Goals</i>  |
|----------|---|---|
| #1.      | Demonstrate existence of an adequate water supply within the development, to serve all proposed lots and land uses. The term applies to both domestic and fire-related water storage and supply.  | <i>Guiding Principle #4.<br/>Land Use, Economy,<br/>Environment Goals.</i>  |
| #2.      | Demonstrate that surface water and groundwater will not be degraded, according to state standards. Developments adjoining streams or lakes should use appropriate best management practices to protect water quality and riparian habitats.   | <i>Guiding Principle #2.<br/>Land Use, Economy,<br/>Environment, Recreation<br/>Goals.</i>                            |
| #3.      | Be located within areas that are reasonably accessible to emergency services.   | <i>Guiding Principles #1 &amp; #4.<br/>Land Use, Public Services,<br/>3C's Goals.</i>                                 |
| #4.      | Be legally and physically accessible by County or other public roads that are maintained year-round and capable of handling additional traffic. If not, new development should pay for necessary road construction and reconstruction.  | <i>Guiding Principles #1 &amp; #4.<br/>Land Use, Public Services<br/>Goals.</i>                                       |
| #5.      | Be evaluated according to the fire risk rating factors developed by the State of Montana (Appendix L) and the fire management objectives listed in Appendix M. Where new development falls into high-extreme risk categories, it should be redesigned to reduce risk to the low level category. Include Madison County Subdivision Planning Fire Protection Board and the local fire district in fire risk evaluations. | <i>Guiding Principle #4.<br/>Land Use, Public Services<br/>Goals.</i>   |
| #6.      | Be located, designed, and scaled to preserve productive agricultural lands or any environmentally sensitive areas (e.g., riverbank, floodplain, critical watersheds, steep slopes, erodible soils, animals/plants of special concern, important wildlife habitat). For example, a clustered development design may be required in order to accomplish this.   | <i>Guiding Principles #2 &amp; #3.<br/>Land Use, Economy,<br/>Environment, Recreation,<br/>Public Services Goals.</i> |
| #7.      | Be designed and scaled to respect neighboring land uses, including historic resources.  | <i>Land Use, Environment<br/>Goals.</i>   |

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| #8.  | Be located, designed, and scaled to preserve scenic views and vistas from public lands and public rights-of-way.  | <i>Guiding Principle #2. Economy, Environment Goals.</i>           |
| #9.  | Be encouraged to retain traditional public access to public lands and waters.   | <i>Economy, Recreation Goals.</i>                                  |
| #10. | Uphold the Right-to-Farm protections afforded by Montana State Statutes.  | <i>Guiding Principle #3. Land Use, Economy Goals.</i>              |
| #11. | In the case of large-scale residential and mixed use developments, contribute to a mix of housing opportunities and prices.   | <i>Land Use, Economy Goals.</i>                                    |
| #12. | Where agricultural land is being converted, encourage the continuation of agricultural practices on the land.   | <i>Guiding Principle #3. Land Use, Economy, Environment Goals.</i> |
| #13. | Be evaluated for the cumulative impacts of development upon area resources, including local economy and public services.  | <i>Economy, Environment, Public Services Goals.</i>                |
| #14. | In the case of land exchanges which put public lands into private ownership, uses of a privately acquired exchange tract should reflect the prevailing land use in the area immediately surrounding the tract. The exchange of lands should not trigger more intensive land use (e.g., residential development in an area of livestock grazing). Similarly, privately held leases on public lands should not introduce residential development into an area of traditional resource-based use (e.g., agriculture, logging, mining, outdoor recreation). | <i>Land Use Goal.</i>  |
| #15. | Involve consultation with municipal officials during project design and review stages, in the case of any proposed development located within two miles of an incorporated community. Consultation in this and the next three policies means contact for the purposes of notification and information exchange.   | <i>Land Use, 3C's Goals.</i>                                       |
| #16. | Involve consultation with appropriate local service districts during project design and review stages.  | <i>Public Services, 3C's Goals.</i>                                |
| #17. | Involve consultation with appropriate land management agencies during project design and review stages, in the case of any proposed development located within two miles of public lands. Involve consultation with appropriate resource management agencies as well.   | <i>Land Use, 3C's Goals.</i>                                       |
| #18. | Involve consultation with potentially affected citizens, especially immediately adjacent landowners and residents, during project design and review stages.   | <i>Land Use, 3C's Goals.</i>                                       |

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|------|---|--|
| #19. | Include a land stewardship plan that addresses management responsibility for such things as noxious weed control, public access (where provided), wildlife, livestock grazing, other agricultural uses, recycling, and protection of water resources. | <i>Land Use, Environment Goals.</i>                                    |
| #20. | Provide that transportation and utility improvements will be made in a manner that maintains and supports, and does not negatively impact, the viability of agriculture.  | <i>Guiding Principle #3. Land Use, Economy, Public Services Goals.</i> |

## Land Conservation/Utilization Activities Should:

| Policy # | Policy Statement  | <i>Pertinent Guiding Principles and/or Goals</i>                    |
|----------|---|---|
| #1.      | Be targeted towards productive agricultural lands, important wildlife habitat, watershed protection including river corridors and riparian areas, historic preservation, areas of recreational opportunity, and scenic views and vistas.  | <i>Guiding Principles #2 &amp; #3. Land Use, Environment Goals.</i> |
| #2.      | Involve consultation with municipal officials or land management agencies (if site is located within two miles of their jurisdictional boundary), appropriate resource management agencies, local service districts, and potentially affected citizens. Consultation means contact for the purposes of notification and information exchange. | <i>Land Use, Public Services, 3C's Goals.</i>                       |
| #3.      | Include a land stewardship plan that addresses management responsibility for such things as noxious weed control, public access (where provided), wildlife, livestock grazing, other agricultural uses, recycling, and protection of water resources.   | <i>Land Use, Environment Goals.</i>                                 |

### **Use of County Profile Information**

In order to carry out these Land Development and Conservation/Utilization Policies, Madison County officials and landowners should make full use of County profile information, as it exists and as more data become available. Presently, this information includes: historic resources, population/housing/economic data, public/private land ownership, County subdivisions/certificates of survey, soil survey data, flood-prone areas, big game winter range and overall distribution, animal and plant species of special concern, current land uses (on private lands), conservation easements, service district boundaries (e.g., schools, hospitals), emergency service areas and response times, County road usage/conditions, and highway traffic counts (See Appendices D-H).

Much of this data exists in mapped form. Several databases are electronically linked to facilitate production of map overlays (which layer one type of information on top of another, to assist in land evaluations). However, several databases are not yet entered into the County's electronic mapping system. As that system becomes more fully developed, many more overlays will become available. They will increasingly serve as valuable tools for future areawide planning and development suitability analysis. Although much of the data is scaled for regional-level planning rather than site-specific development planning and design, the information can readily identify areas where more extensive data-gathering is needed in order to determine a particular site's suitability for particular land uses.

## **V. SPECIAL PLANNING AREAS**

Madison County encompasses a variety of landscapes and communities. While the County Comprehensive Plan offers an overall framework for guiding future growth and change, other more specific plans treat more localized development issues and opportunities in greater detail.

### **Coordination with Community Plans**

Ennis, Sheridan, Twin Bridges, and Virginia City each have an adopted comprehensive plan. These community plans offer Madison County additional guidance in making land use and development decisions on lands located close to established townsites.

The 1995 Virginia City Comprehensive Plan and 1996 Ennis Comprehensive Plan Update both cover a planning area beyond town limits, as allowed by Montana state statutes (Virginia City's plan goes one mile out; Ennis' plan goes three miles out). Land development and conservation proposals reviewed by Madison County for the outlying areas of Ennis or Virginia City should be evaluated against not only this 1999 County Plan Update, but also the town's plan. These two community plans are hereby incorporated into the County Plan, in an effort to promote coordinated planning by Madison County and its municipalities (See Appendices N and O).

### **Incorporation of Other County Plans**

Area, facility, or program-specific plans adopted by Madison County officials should be prepared and carried out in a manner consistent with the County Comprehensive Plan. The 1999 Update incorporates the following plans:

- Big Sky Master Plan (See Appendix P)
- Madison County airport master plans, 1971-86 (See Appendix Q)
- Madison County Noxious Weed Management Plan, 1996 (See Appendix R)

Wherever possible in keeping with state law, implementation and any future revision of these specific plans should adhere to the Guiding Principles, goals and objectives, and policies of the Madison County Comprehensive Plan.

### **Update of Madison Valley Plan**

The 1988 County Comprehensive Plan Update contains an area-specific plan for the Madison Valley (See Appendix C). In the decade since the 1988 Update was prepared, residential and recreational development has continued in many parts of the valley. During that time, the Madison County Planning Board has found the Madison Valley Plan to be useful in some respects and problematic in others.

Several of the Madison Valley Plan's area-specific policies for future land development and conservation remain relevant and are hereby reaffirmed. A few have been slightly modified. The updated policies are outlined below:

- *Madison River Corridor.* Preserve and protect the entire corridor, from Quake Lake north to the County line, from encroachment by development. Specifically, the following values should be protected: scenic, fish and wildlife, recreation, agricultural, historic and archaeologic, and floodplain sites.

- *County Road System.* Locate new subdivisions in areas where they can be served by existing roads, and where these roads are capable of providing an adequate level of services without increasing the cost of services.
- *Recreational Amenities.* Locate new subdivisions in areas which will not adversely impact present or future recreational amenities, including the Madison River Corridor, Ennis Lake, national forest lands, and other public lands. Big game winter ranges, public access routes to public lands, fishing access sites, and campgrounds should be protected from improper or incompatible development in order to preserve and protect wildlife resources and promote recreation and tourism elements of the economy.
- *Agriculture.* Subdivisions locating adjacent to agricultural lands must fully consider the impacts of development on the agricultural operations. In addition, key agricultural lands should be protected from development or other uses which would forever remove them from agricultural production. Encourage clustered development. Incentives should be developed to implement this policy, and private property rights should be respected.
- *Mining.* Limit or prohibit residential development close to operating mines or important mineral deposits where surface and mineral estates are separately owned.
- *Highway corridors.* Development adjacent to the highways leading in and out of Madison Valley's communities should be aesthetically pleasing, in keeping with the scenic beauty of the valley.

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The land use recommendations and map contained in the 1988 Madison Valley Plan have grown outdated. They are hereby dropped for the following reason:

The Madison Valley Plan's density recommendations for residential land use promote an unfortunate "bull's eye" pattern of scattered rural residential development. Lots of one acre are encouraged in the suburban area immediately surrounding the Town of Ennis; lots up to 2.5 acres in size are recommended between the suburban area and a ten-mile radius from Ennis; and lots of 5-20 acres are encouraged in more remote locations. This recommended land use pattern invites conversion of agricultural land and other open space to a landscape of "ranchettes". It offers no strategy for preserving open space while accommodating new development on a limited scale or through clustering.

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Action plan recommendations of the 1983 Madison River Corridor Study (See Appendix S) were incorporated into the 1988 Madison Valley Plan. These recommendations urged an aggressive but totally voluntary approach to river corridor preservation and protection, through the tools of conservation easements, land trades, cooperative management, and sensitive subdivision design. In 1993, the Madison County Planning Board and County Commissioners amended County subdivision regulations to include a required 500' building setback from the Madison River. Even still, construction close to the riverbank has continued to occur on pre-existing subdivision lots and certificate of survey parcels.



The totally voluntary approach recommended by the 1983 Madison River Corridor Study can no longer be endorsed. In addition to subdivision regulations governing new construction along the river on newly created lots, Madison County landowners and elected officials should consider zoning as an additional regulatory tool. A recommended approach for using this tool is discussed under Plan Implementation.

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Over time, a revised set of land use recommendations should be prepared by Madison Valley landowners themselves. They should also revisit, expand, and clarify the above-listed policies for guiding future growth and development in the Madison Valley.

Members of the Madison Valley Ranchlands Group are already working to develop a land use plan and possible zoning district for several North Meadow Creek properties. Their “neighborhood” plan, in combination with landowner-led planning efforts in other parts of the Madison Valley, can provide the basis for a proposed Madison Valley Plan Update. Such area-specific plans will be incorporated into the County Comprehensive Plan.

Other Madison Valley landowners are strongly encouraged to begin working on land use plans for their respective neighborhoods (See Plan Implementation). All such efforts should be consistent with the above-listed Madison Valley land use policies and the Guiding Principles, goals and objectives, and policies expressed in this 1999 County Plan Update.

### **Ruby Valley, Jefferson Valley, Big Hole/Beaverhead Valleys**

Land use plans for these other areas of Madison County do not exist. The landowner-led, neighborhood planning approach outlined above for the Madison Valley is encouraged here as well (See Plan Implementation).

### **Virginia City/Nevada City Area**

Despite an ongoing and aggressive preservation effort, the historic resources and character of Virginia City and Nevada City remain threatened by the potential for inappropriate development on lands adjacent to the historic towns. A land use plan and land use regulations are needed to guide future growth and development in the area surrounding the incorporated limits of Virginia City (See Plan Implementation).

Such planning should consider the historic preservation, entryway corridor, watershed protection, and viewshed protection goals and objectives contained in the Virginia City Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the Guiding Principles, goals and objectives, and policies of this 1999 County Plan Update should be upheld. An effective planning process will require involvement by not only town and county officials, but also affected landowners (including the State of Montana) and other local citizens. Any joint city-county-landowner planning effort should respect private property rights as set out in law, and the jurisdictional authority of each governing body.

## **VI. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION -- RECOMMENDED ACTIONS**

Plan implementation is often the weak link in a comprehensive planning effort. It is admittedly difficult to sustain a public planning process beyond the point of plan adoption. However, without an active program of plan implementation, the time, thought, and energy invested by citizens and local officials in preparing (or updating) the plan document are largely fruitless.

Madison County already uses one important tool of comprehensive plan implementation, namely, the County subdivision regulations and subdivision review process. Approval of future subdivisions in Madison County should contain a finding, in each case, that the project is in substantial compliance with the Madison County Comprehensive Plan. In particular, this 1999 Plan Update should serve as a primary guide for addressing the six public interest criteria listed in the Montana subdivision and platting act. The criteria are: effects on (1) agriculture, (2) agricultural water user facilities, (3) local services, (4) the natural environment, (5) wildlife and wildlife habitat, and (6) public health and safety.

Besides the ongoing review of County subdivision proposals, this 1999 County Plan Update outlines an implementation program of 25 recommended actions. Eighteen of the actions involve voluntary initiatives or incentives. Seven involve local regulation. Pertinent Guiding Principles and/or Goals are identified in each case. A rationale for each recommended action is also given. The overall program looks to County officials and staff, civic groups, landowner groups, individual citizens, and cooperating public partners to share the responsibility for plan implementation.

## Recommended Voluntary Actions and Incentives:

| Action # | Recommended Actions by Category   | Pertinence to Guiding Principles and/or Goals  |
|----------|---|--|
|          | <b>Preservation</b>   |  |
| 1.       | <p><b>Work with public and private organizations and landowners to encourage conservation easements, deed restrictions, land exchanges, and other forms of voluntary land conservation as a means of preserving productive agricultural lands, river corridors, and other critical resources.</b></p> <p>Rationale: Voluntary tools for land conservation have good potential in Madison County. Private landowners must have ready access to the information and organizations that can help them use such tools.</p>  | <i>Guiding Principles #2, 3. Land Use, Economy, Environment, Recreation, 3C's Goals.</i> |
| 2.       | <p><b>Establish a program for the purchase of conservation easements and development rights. Incorporate working definitions of productive agricultural lands, important wildlife habitat, and scenic views and vistas (See Actions #4 and #6 below) into the program. If feasible, create a local land trust to oversee fundraising and conservation agreements. Solicit funds from sources such as the federal Farmland Protection Program, the State of Montana, private foundations and individuals.</b></p> <p>Rationale: Purchase of conservation easements and development rights puts money in the pocket of the individual landowner, who in turn supports the land conservation effort. A local land trust can organize and legitimize a major fundraising effort and conservation easement/purchase of development rights program.</p> | <i>Guiding Principles #1, 2, 3. Land Use, Economy, Environment, Recreation Goals.</i>    |

|    | Planning & Technical Assistance   |   |
|----|---|---|
| 3. | <p><b>Encourage area plans and landowner-initiated zoning, and provide information and technical assistance to accomplish both. The products of such localized planning should be consistent with the Guiding Principles, goals and objectives, and policies of this 1999 County Plan Update. <i>First Priorities (assuming citizen support): North Meadow Creek area, Virginia City/Nevada City area.</i></b></p> <p>Rationale: Madison County includes many different landscapes and communities. More localized planning enables individual citizens and landowners to work as neighbors to develop their own plan for the future, and “give it teeth” through the regulatory tool of zoning.</p>  | <p><i>All Guiding Principles.<br/>All Goals.</i></p>                                    |
| 4. | <p><b>Work with landowners, local conservation districts, and agency resource specialists to carry out a land evaluation process which will more clearly define “productive agricultural lands” and “important wildlife habitat” in Madison County. Institute a site assessment procedure which will incorporate these definitions into the review of future land development and conservation proposals in a fair and consistent manner.</b></p> <p>Rationale: In Madison County, “productive agricultural lands” and “important wildlife habitat” mean different things to different people. We need a clearer understanding of these terms, so we can factor them into our assessments of land development and conservation proposals.</p> | <p><i>Guiding Principle #3.<br/>Land Use, Economy,<br/>Environment, 3C’s Goals.</i></p> |
| 5. | <p><b>Work with local conservation districts to conduct watershed assessments and address issues of water quality and water supply.</b></p> <p>Rationale: Clean water -- and enough of it -- are essential to the health of our economy and environment. We need better information about our surface and groundwater resources, to help safeguard these critical resources in the face of continued growth. Conservation district efforts to validate the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) listing of water quality-impaired streams should be supported. Water quality and water supply problems should be addressed in a cooperative fashion.</p>   | <p><i>Guiding Principle #2. All Goals.</i></p>  |

|           | <b>Planning &amp; Technical Assistance, Cont.</b>  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
| <b>6.</b> | <p><b>Carry out a public process of identifying important scenic views and vistas in the County. Also, update the existing inventory of County cultural and historic resources. Utilize special planning area groups as much as possible.</b></p> <p>Rationale: If scenic resources are to be factored into the County's review of future development proposals, we need to designate those views and vistas which are important to preserve. Similarly, if we want to protect our cultural and historic resources, we need to know more about what exists, and where.</p> | <p><i>Guiding Principle #2.<br/>Land Use, Environment,<br/>Recreation, 3C's Goals</i></p>              |
| <b>7.</b> | <p><b>Combine land use inventory information with MT Dept. of Revenue property ownership records to explore possibilities for re-aggregating lots, subdivision redesign, and agricultural uses of idle lands.</b></p> <p>Rationale: Opportunities exist for using subdivided but undeveloped lands in ways that will better fit County goals and objectives for land use and still serve private landowner interests.</p>  | <p><i>Guiding Principle #3.<br/>Land Use, Economy,<br/>Environment, Public Services<br/>Goals.</i></p> |
| <b>8.</b> | <p><b>Prepare and implement a County capital improvements program which will include priorities for road maintenance, as well as an estimated timeframe, budget, and potential funding sources for project implementation.</b></p> <p>Rationale: County funds for capital improvements are severely limited. Priorities must be set, consistent with County goals and objectives for land use and public services, so that the most critical needs get addressed first.</p>  | <p><i>Guiding Principle #4.<br/>Land Use, Public Services<br/>Goals.</i></p>                           |
| <b>9.</b> | <p><b>Work with emergency service providers and the public to identify those areas which are "reasonably accessible" to emergency services.</b></p> <p>Rationale: County officials are legally obligated to try to make land use decisions which safeguard public health and safety. The identification of areas with reasonable access to emergency services will provide the public with better information and County officials with clearer standards for development review.</p>  | <p><i>Guiding Principles #1, 4.<br/>Land Use, Public Services,<br/>3C's Goals.</i></p>                 |

|            |   |   |
|------------|---|---|
|            | <b>Planning &amp; Technical Assistance, Cont.</b>   |   |
| <b>10.</b> | <p><b>Make comprehensive planning an ongoing, budgeted program of County government. As one part of this, continue to build GIS database and keep mapped information current.</b></p> <p>Rationale: Comprehensive planning does not stop with the adoption of a plan document. In fact, that's when the "real work" begins. An ongoing planning program is needed to coordinate implementation of the County Comprehensive Plan.</p>  | <p><i>All Guiding Principles.</i><br/><i>All Goals.</i></p>   |
|            | <b>Information &amp; Communications</b>   |   |
| <b>11.</b> | <p><b>Prepare an informational brochure for new and prospective landowners. Address topics pertinent to buying property, owning land, building a home, and living in Madison County. Work cooperatively with the Board of Realtors to assure timely distribution.</b></p> <p>Rationale: It helps everyone if newcomers make informed real estate decisions. They need to be aware of local laws and customs, and they should know what kinds of questions to ask (e.g., Where's the nearest fire station? Are there noxious weeds on this property? Can I take water from the ditch? Who's responsible for maintaining the fence?) as they explore their real estate options. <b>Note: This action is already underway, through citizen initiative.</b></p> | <p><i>All Guiding Principles.</i><br/><i>Land Use, Economy,</i><br/><i>Environment, Recreation,</i><br/><i>Public Services Goals.</i></p> |
| <b>12.</b> | <p><b>Prepare and distribute a user-friendly guide to the subdivision process.</b></p> <p>Rationale: Going through the process of subdivision could be easier on everyone if, at the earliest stage of project development, subdivision applicants are given a step-by-step account of what will be expected of them and what they can expect from County officials and staff.</p>  | <p><i>Land Use Goal.</i></p>  |
| <b>13.</b> | <p><b>Establish an interagency steering committee to strengthen cooperation and communications among county, state, and federal officials on land planning and management-related topics.</b></p> <p>Rationale: Management of public lands affects local government and private landowners in many ways. Similarly, County actions may affect public lands and their managing agencies. Regular discussions between the various public entities can help ensure information-sharing, consultation prior to decisions, and coordination of land planning and management activities.</p>  | <p><i>Land Use, 3C's Goals.</i></p>   |
|            | <b>Information &amp; Communications, Cont.</b>  |   |
| <b>14.</b> | <b>Meet annually with officials of incorporated communities to help ensure</b>  | <p><i>Guiding Principal #1.</i></p>   |

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|     | <p><b>coordinated planning between the County and towns. Invite local service districts to participate in the discussions.</b></p> <p>Rationale: Little opportunity exists for County and municipal officials to discuss planning-related matters unless they create a special opportunity to do so. Since local service providers often serve both town residents and rural residents of Madison County, it makes sense to include them in the discussion.</p>  | <p><i>Land Use, Public Services, 3C's Goals.</i></p>             |
| 15. | <p><b>Support State legislation which aids County land use planning, promotes the retention of agricultural land and the economic viability of family farms and ranches, and restructures the property tax system to ensure that new development pays for the public services it requires.</b></p> <p>Rationale: State government has the authority to do things that local governments cannot do. Legislation which supports County planning efforts, the agricultural community, and fair and equitable taxation can help Madison County achieve its comprehensive planning goals.</p> | <p><i>Guiding Principle #3.<br/>Land Use, Economy Goals.</i></p> |
|     | <b>Economic Development</b>  |  |
| 16. | <p><b>Coordinate all County economic development-related activities with CEDAT (Community Economic Development Action Team) in Madison Valley, STAT (Sheridan/Twin Bridges Action Team) in Ruby Valley, local chambers of commerce, Montana Chamber of Commerce, Montana Department of Agriculture, and Headwaters RC&amp;D (Resource Conservation and Development District).</b></p> <p>Rationale: Madison County should not act alone on matters of local economic development, when there are several community, regional, and state groups already in existence.</p>                 | <p><i>Economy, 3C's Goals.</i></p>                               |



|            | <b>Economic Development, Cont.</b>  |                      |
|------------|---|----------------------|
| <b>17.</b> | <p><b>Conduct a professionally done Countywide economic analysis. Besides an examination of the different sectors of the local economy, the analysis should include an assessment of the economic role (benefits and costs) of public lands. The analysis should also suggest strategies for: (a) strengthening traditional industries, (b) encouraging newer, expanding industries, and (c) recruiting new business.</b></p> <p>Rationale: Economic changes in Madison County in recent decades have made it difficult to understand fully the present and potential future role of various sectors (e.g., agriculture, outdoor recreation and tourism, retirement-related services). We need better information about the composition of our local economy in order to design and carry out effective local economic development strategies that are consistent with Madison County's Comprehensive Plan.</p> | Economy, 3C's Goals. |
| <b>18.</b> | <p><b>Investigate the pros and cons of instituting a property tax incentive program for new or expanding local industry. If benefits outweigh costs, design and adopt a tax incentive program. Investigate other incentives to support agriculture, entrepreneurship, and other sectors of the economy.</b></p> <p>Rationale: Montana State Statutes authorize county governments to give property tax breaks to new and expanding industries. Such a program may help Madison County achieve its economy goals and objectives, but a thorough study of program benefits and costs is in order first. Note: Some legislative changes in the program may be desirable (e.g., a shorter time period for the incentive).</p>   | Economy Goal.        |

## Recommended Regulatory Actions:

| Action # | Recommended Action   | Pertinence to Guiding Principles and/or Goals  |
|----------|--|--|
| 1.       | <p><b>Revise County subdivision regulations as needed to reflect the policies contained in this 1999 County Plan Update. Incorporate working definitions of “adequate water supply,” “productive agricultural land,” “important wildlife habitat,” and areas that are “reasonably accessible” to emergency services into the revised regulations. Do likewise for scenic views and vistas, and historical and cultural resources, as these resources become more clearly identified.</b></p> <p>Rationale: Subdivision regulations are a tool for implementing the County Comprehensive Plan. They should be consistent with the latest plan document and planning information.</p>  | <p><i>All Guiding Principles. Land Use, Economy, Environment, Public Services, 3C’s Goals.</i></p> |
| 2.       | <p><b>Institute an enforcement program to ensure compliance with County subdivision and/or zoning approvals.</b></p> <p>Rationale: County subdivision and zoning decisions are intended to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. The County should follow up with periodic field checks to make sure that subdividers have complied with the conditions under which their developments received approval. Similarly, once any zoning districts are created and applied in Madison County, an enforcement effort will be needed to ensure compliance with these new land use regulations.</p>   | <p><i>Guiding Principle #4. Land Use, Environment, Public Services Goals.</i></p>                  |
| 3.       | <p><b>Appoint and provide technical assistance to four citizen-based task forces to develop zoning proposals for river corridor protection (Madison, Ruby, Jefferson, Big Hole/Beaverhead, South Boulder). Instruct task forces to work closely with affected landowners. Adopt river corridor zoning. <i>First Priorities (assuming citizen support): Madison River, Ruby River.</i></b></p> <p>Rationale: County subdivision regulations currently include a construction setback from our rivers. However, this requirement does not apply to dozens of pre-existing riverfront lots and parcels. The County floodplain ordinance requires new construction to be elevated above the 100-year floodplain, but it does not prevent buildings from being placed close to the riverbank. County sanitation regulations</p> | <p><i>Guiding Principle #2. Environment, Recreation, 3C’s Goals.</i></p>                           |

|           |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
| <p>4.</p> | <p>stipulate construction setbacks for private water and septic systems, but not buildings. Only through zoning can consistent policies of river corridor protection be enforced. Since each river corridor has a distinct character, zoning should reflect such differences. Since zoning affects what riverfront property owners can and cannot do with their land, they should be directly involved in the design of any river corridor zoning proposal.</p> <p><b>Map the 100-year floodplain along Madison, Ruby, Jefferson, Big Hole, Beaverhead, and South Boulder Rivers. Then, revise floodplain ordinance to recognize officially designated floodplain. <i>First priorities (assuming citizen support): Ruby River, Jefferson River.</i></b></p> <p>Rationale: Madison County has only a roughly drawn map of “flood-prone areas” to guide administration of its floodplain ordinance. More accurate information is needed, in order to protect the floodplain resource, safeguard public health and safety, and minimize public service costs. Floodplain mapping is a cost-shared service provided by the Natural Resources Conservation Service.</p> | <p><i>Guiding Principle #2.<br/>Land Use, Economy,<br/>Environment, Public<br/>Services Goals.</i></p> |
|-----------|--|--|

|    |  |  |
|----|--|--|
| 5. | <p><b>In cooperation with state and federal public land managers and neighboring property owners, initiate zoning of public lands. <i>First priority: BLM potential exchange tracts.</i></b></p> <p>Rationale: Transfers of public land to private ownership or recreational lease agreements have the potential to promote residential development in areas of traditional agricultural or other resource use. Now and in the future, BLM is willing to have Madison County zone its potential exchange tracts (25 parcels on nearly 4000 acres, as of 1998) to ensure that its land exchange program does not cause land use conflicts.</p>  | All Goals.   |
| 6. | <p><b>Conduct a cost-of-services study. Based on study findings, institute a payment program to cover costs of new development.</b></p> <p>Rationale: National and neighboring county studies have shown that: (a) residential development costs county government more in public services than it pays in property taxes; (b) agriculture pays more in property taxes than it requires in public services; and (c) commercial and industrial activities pay a lot more in property taxes than they demand in public services. Different types and locations of residential development generate different levels of local tax revenue and service demands. Although services to the residents of some Madison County subdivisions are likely being subsidized by other local taxpayers (mainly agricultural households), we have no mechanism in place for fairly and accurately assessing those new developments for the added service costs they represent. Until we come up with a method of ensuring that new development pays its own way, the County's ability to provide adequate services to all its citizens will continue to be severely limited.</p> | Guiding Principle #4.<br>Land Use, Public Services,<br>3C's Goals. |
| 7. | <p><b>Adopt a countywide ordinance which provides a more explicit statement of Right-to-Farm protections.</b></p> <p>Rationale: Montana State Statutes confirm that most agricultural activities cannot be considered a "nuisance" in legal terms. But as Madison County's population and landscape continue to change, it is increasingly important that the County issue an official statement of Right-to-Farm protections. The statement would clearly demonstrate Madison County's support for agriculture and help farmers and ranchers in situations of potential conflict with neighboring landowners.</p>   | Guiding Principle #3.<br>Land Use, Economy Goals.                  |

## **VII. PLAN IMPLEMENTATION -- TIMETABLE, RESPONSIBLE PARTIES, AND FUNDING REQUIREMENTS**

Twenty-five recommended actions present a tall order for Madison County officials and citizens committed to plan implementation. Where do we begin?

Setting priorities will help ensure that the most urgent needs receive the County's earliest possible attention. Even so, only a few of the "top priorities" can be handled quickly. Several cannot be accomplished in Year One, nor even by the end of Year Two.

A five-year PRIORITIES FOR ACTION strategy is outlined below. Eighteen action items are targeted for completion by December 2003. The remaining seven recommendations should be addressed prior to the year 2009.

For each priority action, the five-year strategy suggests parties responsible for implementation. It also estimates project costs, based upon preliminary investigations and 1999 dollars.

Madison County may not have the funds in hand, right now, to carry out the entire PRIORITIES FOR ACTION strategy. However, it is an important feature of the planning process, to: (1) agree on what needs to be done; (2) identify a sequence and target dates for accomplishing the major projects; and (3) then work on assembling the resources (both persons and funds) necessary to get the job done.

## PRIORITIES FOR ACTION, 1999-2003

| Action Number<br>(#s refer to recommended actions listed in prior chapter) | Recommended Action   | Complete By:   | Responsible Parties   | Estimated Project Cost<br>(in 1999 dollars) <sup>2</sup> |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| <b>Voluntary:</b>  |  |  |   |  |
| 3.   | Support Area Planning, Landowner-Initiated Zoning with Information & Technical Assistance. | December 2003 (Goal is complete coverage of Madison County private lands.)   | Madison County citizens, Co. Commissioners, Planning Board and staff, Co. attorney.   | \$37,500* <sup>3</sup><br>(\$7,500 @ yr)                 |
| 4.   | Conduct Land Evaluation Process, and Institute Site Assessment Procedure.                  | a) Land evaluation process completed by December 1999.<br>b) Site assessment work begins in 2000. It is ongoing, as project proposals arise. | Landowners, local conservation districts, Planning Board and staff, NRCS, Forest Service, BLM, and other cooperating agencies.              | a) \$5-15,000*<br>b) \$4,000*<br>(\$1,000 @ yr)          |
| 5.   | Support Watershed Assessment Efforts, and Address Water Quality/Supply Issues.             | Ongoing.   | Local conservation districts, landowners, Madison County Planning Board and staff, state and federal resource and land management agencies. | Minimal cost*  |

<sup>2</sup>These estimated project costs should be considered rough approximations. Actual cost, in each case, will depend upon project design and scheduling.

<sup>3</sup>Asterisk denotes a commitment of County planning staff time to the project.

|     |   |   |   |                            |
|-----|---|---|---|----------------------------|
| 8.  | Prepare & Adopt County Capital Improvements Program.  | June 2000 (or in time for start of County fiscal year 2001) | Madison County Commissioners, Planning Board and staff, other Co. staff.  | \$ 7,500*                  |
| 9.  | Identify those areas which are "reasonably accessible" to emergency services.                 | June 1999   | Madison County Planning Board and staff, emergency service providers, interested citizens.                                | \$1,000*                   |
| 10. | Establish Ongoing County Comprehensive Planning Program.                                      | June 1999 (or in time for start of County fiscal year 2000) | Madison County Commissioners and Planning Board.  | \$15,000 @ yr <sup>4</sup> |
| 11. | Publish, Begin Distribution of New Landowner Brochure.  | June 1999 (may be completed much sooner)                    | Madison/Beaverhead County Board of Realtors, Planning Board and staff, Co. attorney, Co. sanitarian, interested citizens. | \$ 2,000*                  |
| 12. | Publish, Begin Distribution of Subdivision Guide.   | December 1999   | Madison County Planning Board and staff.  | \$ 1,500*                  |
| 13. | Establish Interagency Steering Committee.   | June 1999, then ongoing                                     | Madison County Commissioners, local conservation districts, state and federal land managers.                              | Minimal cost               |
| 14. | Hold Annual Meetings with Municipal Officials. Invite Local Service District Representatives. | January 1999, then ongoing                                  | Madison County Commissioners, Planning Board, municipal officials,  | Minimal cost               |

<sup>4</sup>A commitment to this expense reduces overall program costs by \$15,000 @ year.



|                    |   |  |   |                             |
|--------------------|---|--|---|-----------------------------|
|                    |   |  | local service districts.  |                             |
| 15.                | Support State Legislation for Planning & Agriculture.                         | 1999, 2001, and 2003 Legislative Sessions              | Madison County Commissioners, Planning Board, local conservation districts, area legislators, agricultural and environmental groups.                | Minimal cost                |
| 17.                | Conduct County Economic Analysis.   | December 2003  | Planning Board and staff, Headwaters RC&D, CEDAT & STAT, chambers of commerce, Sonoran Institute, Montana universities, state and federal agencies. | \$10-30,000*                |
| <b>Regulatory:</b> |   |  |   |                             |
| 1.                 | Revise County Subdivision Regulations.<br><br>a) Phase I<br>b) Phase II       | a) March 1999<br>b) December 1999                      | Co. Commissioners, Planning Board and staff, Co. attorney, service providers, development community, other interested citizens.                     | \$ 2,500*                   |
| 2.                 | Institute enforcement procedures to ensure subdivision and zoning compliance. | June 1999, then ongoing.                               | Planning Board and staff, Co. attorney.   | \$5,000 *<br>(\$1,000 @ yr) |
| 3.                 | Zone River Corridors.   | December 2002 (Goal is coverage of all river corridors | Local citizens, Planning Board and  | \$30,000* <sup>5</sup>      |

<sup>5</sup>This project will likely overlap with area-specific planning and landowner-initiated zoning activities. In such cases, cost-savings should occur.

|    |   |   |  |  |
|----|---|---|--|--|
|    |   | with development or development potential)                                    | staff, Co. attorney, Co. sanitarian, state & federal resource specialists.   |  |
| 4. | <p>Zone public lands.</p> <p>a) BLM potential exchange tracts.</p> <p>b) Other state and federal lands.</p>   | <p>a) April 1999</p> <p>b) December 2001</p>                                  | Co. Commissioners, Planning Board and staff, Co. attorney, BLM, Forest Service, MT Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, MT Dept. of Natural Resources and Conservation, adjacent landowners. | <p>a) \$1,000*</p> <p>b) \$3,000*</p>                                      |
| 5. | <p>Establish Development Payment Program.</p> <p>a) Conduct Cost-of-Services Study.</p> <p>b) Design &amp; Institute Program.</p> <p>c) Administer Program.</p> | <p>a) June 2000</p> <p>b) December 2000</p> <p>c) Ongoing as of Jan. 2001</p> | Madison County Commissioners, Planning Board and staff, Co. attorney, service providers.   | <p>a) \$ 45,000</p> <p>b) \$ 5,000*</p> <p>c) \$ 3,000* (\$1,000 @ yr)</p> |
| 6. | Adopt Right-to-Farm Ordinance.  | December 1999   | Co. Commissioners, Planning Board and staff, Co. attorney, agricultural groups.  | Minimal cost*  |

Total estimated cost of the PRIORITIES FOR ACTION strategy is \$178,000. This represents an average annual investment of \$35,600 for the years 1999-2003. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the estimated costs for the five-year program.

Although this “price tag” may seem high and unaffordable, a substantial portion of these funds can be raised from a variety of sources. Possible avenues include: an increase in County subdivision review, sanitation review, and construction permit fees, institution of a floodplain development review fee, state and federal grants accessible through local conservation districts and Headwaters RC&D, Farm Bill funding allocations, ISTEA (federal transportation act) grants, technical assistance from nonprofit organizations, Montana State University, the University of Montana, Natural Resources Conservation Service, other state and federal agencies, Cyprus settlement funds allocated to Madison County and other local jurisdictions, PILT (payment-in-lieu-of-taxes paid by federal government to Madison County) monies, private foundations, utility companies, local businesses, agricultural and environmental groups, and generous individuals who care about the future quality of life in Madison County. Appendix T suggests several additional potential sources of funds.

A second price tag is reflected in the above-outlined strategy, under the “Responsible Parties” column. Effective implementation of Madison County’s comprehensive planning program will require the time, careful thought, knowledge, and energy of many groups and individuals -- not only the Planning Board and its staff, but the County Commissioners, other County staff, resource specialists from various state and federal agencies, civic and business groups, nonprofit organizations, and scores of local citizens.

An annual review of Plan implementation progress should be conducted, and a status report issued to the public. Evaluating progress creates an opportunity to enjoy moments of accomplishment, make minor program adjustments, and re-commit to continuing the job. Annual evaluations may also point up the need to amend the Madison County Comprehensive Plan. Between now and the year 2009, one or more such plan updates will likely be necessary.

A summary timetable of the PRIORITIES FOR ACTION, 1999-2003 strategy is provided in Figure 2. The actual pace of progress will depend upon the availability of funds and technical resources. In fact, the early months of 1999 may have to include an aggressive fundraising campaign to support plan implementation.

Adoption of this 1999 Plan Update does not commit Madison County officials to carrying out the projects in strict accordance with the timeframe. It does, however, mean that County officials endorse the proposed strategy as the overall focus for implementation of the County’s Comprehensive Plan.

Table 2

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION, 1999-2003**

## Cost Breakdown

| COST CATEGORIES   | ESTIMATED COST, 1999<br>Dollars (for total five-year<br>period) |
|---|---|
| County planning staff time, for:<br>Comprehensive planning<br>Mapping<br>Subdivision/zoning administration <sup>6</sup>               | \$ 55,000<br>15,000<br>10,000<br>\$ 80,000                      |
| Other County staff time<br>(e.g., Co. attorney and Co. sanitarian)  | \$ 7,500  |
| Professional Services Contracts, for:<br>County economic analysis<br>Cost-of-services study<br>Technical assistance on other projects | \$ 20,000<br>45,000<br>5,000<br>\$ 70,000                       |
| Materials and Supplies  | \$ 13,000   |
| Public Outreach/Public Participation <sup>7</sup>   | \$ 7,500  |
|   |   |
| <b>TOTAL ESTIMATED COST, 1999-2003</b>  | <b>\$178,000</b>  |

<sup>6</sup>Does not include ongoing subdivision review responsibilities.

<sup>7</sup>Includes some stipend or travel expense reimbursement for citizen task force members.

Figure 2

**PRIORITIES FOR ACTION, 1999-2003**

| Action Completed by:                                       | Year One - 1999 |         |         | Year Two - 2000 |         | Year Three - 2001 |         | Year Four - 2002 |         | Year Five - 2003 |         |
|--|-----------------|---------|---------|-----------------|---------|-------------------|---------|------------------|---------|------------------|---------|
| Priority Actions:  | March           | June    | Dec     | June            | Dec     | June              | Dec     | June             | Dec     | June             | Dec     |
| Support Watershed Assessments, Address Water Issues        | Ongoing         | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing         | Ongoing | Ongoing           | Ongoing | Ongoing          | Ongoing | Ongoing          | Ongoing |
| Revise County Subdivision Regulations, Phase I             | XX              |         |         |                 |         |                   |         |                  |         |                  |         |
| Hold Annual Meetings with Municipal Officials, Service Rep | XX              | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing         | Ongoing | Ongoing           | Ongoing | Ongoing          | Ongoing | Ongoing          | Ongoing |
| Support State Legislation for Planning & Agriculture       | xxx             | XX      |         |                 | xxx     | XX                |         |                  | xxx     | XX               |         |
| Zone BLM Potential Exchange Tracts                         | xxx             | XX      |         |                 |         |                   |         |                  |         |                  |         |
| Publish, Begin Distribution of New Landowner Brochure      | xxx             | XX      |         |                 |         |                   |         |                  |         |                  |         |
| Establish Ongoing Co. Comprehensive Planning Program       | xxx             | XX      | Ongoing | Ongoing         | Ongoing | Ongoing           | Ongoing | Ongoing          | Ongoing | Ongoing          | Ongoing |
| Establish Interagency Steering Committee                   | xxx             | XX      | Ongoing | Ongoing         | Ongoing | Ongoing           | Ongoing | Ongoing          | Ongoing | Ongoing          | Ongoing |
| Institute Subdivision, Zoning Enforcement Programs         | xxx             | XX      | Ongoing | Ongoing         | Ongoing | Ongoing           | Ongoing | Ongoing          | Ongoing | Ongoing          | Ongoing |
| ID Areas "Reasonable Accessible" to Emergency Services     | xxx             | XX      |         |                 |         |                   |         |                  |         |                  |         |
| Conduct Land Evaluation Process                            | xxx             | xxx     | XX      |                 |         |                   |         |                  |         |                  |         |
| Revise County Subdivision Regulations, Phase II            |                 | xxx     | XX      |                 |         |                   |         |                  |         |                  |         |
| Adopt Right-to-Farm Ordinance                              |                 | xxx     | XX      |                 |         |                   |         |                  |         |                  |         |

| Priority Actions:  | March | June | Dec | June    | Dec     | June    | Dec     | June    | Dec     | June    | Dec     |
|--|-------|------|-----|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Publish, Begin Distribution of Subdivision Guide.                      |       | xxx  | XX  |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Institute Site Assessment Procedures                                   |       |      | XX  | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| Prepare & Adopt Co. Capital Improvements Program                       |       |      | xxx | XX      |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Conduct Cost-of-Services Study   |       |      | xxx | XX      |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Design & Institute Development Payment Program                         |       |      |     | xxx     | XX      |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Administer Development Payment Program                                 |       |      |     |         |         | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing | Ongoing |
| Zone Other State & Federal Lands                                       |       | xxx  | xxx | xxx     | xxx     | xxx     | XX      |         |         |         |         |
| Zone River Corridors   |       | xxx  | xxx | xxx     | xxx     | xxx     | xxx     | xxx     | XX      |         |         |
| Support Area Planning, Landowner-Initiated Zoning                      |       | xxx  | xxx | xxx     | xxx     | xxx     | xxx     | xxx     | xxx     | xxx     | XX      |
| Conduct County Economic Analysis                                       |       |      |     |         |         |         | xxx     | xxx     | xxx     | xxx     | XX      |
|  |       |      |     |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
|  |       |      |     |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |
| Note:<br>XX denotes project completion<br>xxx denotes work in progress |       |      |     |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |         |

# GLOSSARY

## Of Selected Terms

**Big game winter range:** Habitat which supports the larger hunted animals (e.g., deer, elk, and moose) during the winter months.

**Capital investment:** Money spent to build, expand, or otherwise improve major public facilities (see definition of capital improvements program).

**Capital improvements program:** A program outlining where, when, and how much a community or county plans to invest in major public facilities over the next 5-10 years. A CIP may address items such as roads and bridges, emergency service facilities and equipment, school and library buildings, sewer and water systems, solid waste disposal sites.

**Certificate of survey (COS):** A drawing of a field survey prepared by a registered land surveyor for the purpose of disclosing parcel features and boundary locations. COSs are often filed as a legal document to describe land divisions which are exempt from the subdivision review process.

**Clustered development, or clustering:** Grouping houses on part of a property while maintaining a large amount of open space on the remaining land.

**Comprehensive plan (or master plan, as described in Chapter 76 of Montana State Statutes):** A publicly prepared plan which describes current and future conditions of a community or county, outlines goals and objectives for land use and other features of community life, and recommends implementation measures designed to help achieve the goals.

**Conservation easement:** A voluntary restriction of land use, particularly with respect to residential development. A landowner may sell or donate a conservation easement to a public or private land trust.

**Constitutional Amendment No. 75 (CI-75):** A successful 1998 Montana ballot measure requiring an election and voter approval of any new or increased tax imposed by state or local governments, school districts, and other taxing districts.

**Cost-of-services study:** Research conducted to estimate the cost of local services required by different kinds of development or land use, relative to the property taxes paid.

**Cyprus Settlement lawsuit:** Litigation brought by Madison County and other local taxing jurisdictions against the State of Montana, to contest the state/local disbursement of several years' worth of net proceeds tax revenues paid by Cyprus Industrial Minerals, Inc.

**Deed restriction:** A voluntary land use restriction placed by a landowner on his or her property.

**Density:** The number of buildings or housing units on particular area of land.

**Emergency services:** Community services such as fire protection, law enforcement, ambulance service, quick response, search and rescue, flood and disaster relief. Emergency services are generally provided by local governments or private, nonprofit organizations.

**Entryway corridor:** The roadway corridor leading into and out of a community. Often, the corridor is an area of transitioning land uses, with more intense and urban activities located closest to the community center.

**Floodplain:** A nearly level plain that borders a stream, has been formed by deposits of sediment carried down from the stream, and is subject to flooding unless protected artificially.

**Geographic information system (GIS):** A method of computer mapping that enables layers of land-related information (e.g., soils, roads, waterways, buildings) to be illustrated and analyzed in various combinations. GIS maps and databases may be used to predict future conditions under different hypothetical scenarios.

**Infrastructure:** Public facilities such as sewer and water systems, roads and bridges, and buildings.

**Initiative 105 (I-105):** A property tax freeze approved by Montana voters in 1986. I-105 capped at 1986 levels the number of mills Madison County officials can levy (see mill levy definition).

**Intermontane:** A term used to describe the drainage basins which lie between mountain ranges.

**Intermountain Seismic Belt:** An earthquake-active area of the Rocky Mountain West.

**Land exchange:** Typically, the process by which a public land management agency trades or sells a parcel of public land in exchange for the acquisition of land which is deemed to hold higher resource values for public purposes.

**Land trust:** A nonprofit organization that receives property, conservation easements, and development rights as a way of promoting goals such as open space preservation and farmland protection. A land trust may accept donations and/or make purchases.

**Mill levy:** The level of property tax set by a local government. One mill equals one one-thousandth of the total taxable value of the particular jurisdiction.

**Municipality:** An incorporated city or town.



**Open space:** Defined by Montana state statutes, as “...any land which is provided or preserved for: (a) park or recreational purposes; (b) conservation of land or other natural resources; (c) historic or scenic purposes; or (d) assisting in the shaping of the character, direction, and timing of community development.”

**Payment-in-lieu-of-taxes (PILT):** Annual payment made by the federal government to each county government where federally managed public lands are located. The payment is intended to compensate county governments, in part, for the fact that public lands are exempt from local taxation.

**Prime farmland:** As defined by the Natural Resources Conservation Service, those lands which are best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber, and oilseed crops. In Madison County, prime farmland has an adequate and dependable supply of irrigation water, favorable temperature and growing season, and acceptable acidity and alkalinity.

**Public services:** Services and facilities provided to the general community by government or quasi-public entities. Examples include: roads and bridges, emergency services, schools and libraries, sewer and water systems, and solid waste disposal.

**Ranchette:** A term used to describe small acreages of rural residential development, where landowners generally have a homesite, a few horses or livestock, and a fenced perimeter.

**Re-aggregating lots:** Voluntary action by a landowner or group of landowners to reassemble lots previously created by land division, in order to create one or more larger parcels.

**Right-to-Farm law:** A Montana state law which excludes standard agricultural practices from being considered “nuisances.”<sup>8</sup>

**Riparian area:** Defined by the University of Montana’s Riparian and Wetland Research Program, as the “green zone” which lies between channels of flowing water and uplands and which serves several functions, including: water storage and aquifer recharge, filtering of chemical and organic wastes, sediment trapping, bank building and maintenance, flow energy dissipation, and primary biotic production.

**Species of special concern:** Types of wildlife and vegetation which are considered by the Montana Natural History Program and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to be threatened, endangered, or otherwise vulnerable to decline.

**Subdivision:** The division of a parcel of land into lots for future sale and/or development. In Montana, proposed land divisions that create one or more parcels containing less than 160 acres are generally called subdivisions, and they must be reviewed and approved by the local governing body.

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<sup>8</sup>The statutory provision is found in section 27-30-101 MCA.

**Subdivision moratorium:** Action by a local government to stop, for a specified period of time, the subdivision review and approval process. This action is usually undertaken in order to allow time for the adoption or revision of a comprehensive plan or subdivision regulations.

**Viewshed:** The landscape visible from a particular viewing point.

**Watershed:** All of the land from which water flows into a particular water body.

**Zoning:** A regulatory tool available to local governments to designate the location and character of various land uses.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Refer to Chapter 76 of the Montana State Statutes for a more detailed description of the comprehensive plan, subdivision review process, and zoning.

# APPENDICES

Most of the Appendices listed below are not attached to this plan document. They may, however, be reviewed at the Madison County Planning Office in Virginia City. In several cases, copies are available. Eventually, once all of the maps are in electronic form, they will be easily reproducible. The mapped information and County Profile data will continue to be updated and expanded, as time and resources permit.

- A. Record of Public Input Received During Comprehensive Plan Update Process.
- B. Madison County Comprehensive Plan, 1973. *Note: The primary policies and recommendations of this plan document are attached.*
- C. Madison County Comprehensive Plan Update, 1988. *Note: The primary policies and recommendations of this plan are attached.*
- D. Soil Survey of Madison County Area, Montana. Issued September 1989 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.
- E. Overall Economic Development Plan for Headwaters Resource Conservation & Development Area, 1995 (includes list of historic resources in Madison County).
- F. Summary Profile of Madison County, prepared April 1998.
- G. Data Supplement to 1998 Madison County Profile, prepared April 1998.
- H. Madison County Resource Map Collection and/or Electronic Data Files, as of November 1998.
  - 1. Land ownership (public, private).
  - 2. Parcel ownership, portions of Madison County.
  - 3. County subdivisions and Certificates of Survey.
  - 4. Soil survey data.
  - 5. Flood-prone areas.
  - 6. Big game winter range and overall distribution.
  - 7. Animal/plant species of special concern.
  - 8. Conservation easements.
  - 9. Current land uses (private lands).
  - 10. Population density (1990 Census).
  - 11. District boundaries (schools, fire, conservation districts, hospitals)
  - 12. Emergency service areas and response times.
  - 13. Road profile.
  - 14. Highway traffic counts.
- I. 1998 Survey of Local Service Providers, Survey Results, and Survey Summary.

- J. Madison County portion, Montana List of Waterbodies in Need of Total Maximum Daily Load Development. Draft prepared by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, 1998.
- K. Strategic Economic Action Plan for Ennis and the Madison Valley, April 1998. Prepared for the Community Economic Development Action Team (CEDAT) and the Town of Ennis by Beck Consulting, Inc.
- L. Fire Risk Rating for Existing and Planned Wildland Residential Developments in Montana, March 1993. Montana Department of State Lands.
- M. Fire Management Objectives, November 1998. Prepared by the Big Sky Fire Planning Committee.
- N. Virginia City Comprehensive Plan, 1995.
- O. Ennis Comprehensive Plan Update, 1996.
- P. Big Sky Master Plan.
- Q. Madison County airport plans, 1971-1986.
- R. Madison County Noxious Weed Management Plan, 1996.
- S. The Madison River Corridor Study, 1983.
- T. Report of Recommendations to the Gallatin County Planning Board, from the Gallatin County Open Space Task Force, September 1998.